

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 01813 010933Z

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ACTION EA-10

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R 010615Z MAR 75
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9007
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 1813

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, RP, ID, PK
SUBJ: MUSLIM INSURGENCY IN THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES

REF: MANILA 2394

1. REFTEL, PARA 7, ACCORDING TO MFA DIRECTOR (UN) MUNIR AKRAM, PAKISTAN WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING SCHEDULED TO BE HELD IN CAIRO IN MAY. MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AZIZ AHMED, IS SCHEDULED TO LEAD THE DELEGATION. AKRAM TOLD EMBOFF FEBRUARY 27 THAT PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO IS NOT EXPECTED TO ATTEND. WE PRESUME THAT THIS IS THE CAIRO MEETING REFERRED TO IN REFTEL.

2. THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN HAS RECEIVED NO COMMUNICATION IN THE RECENT PAST FROM PRESIDENT MARCOS ON THE SUBJECT OF PHILIPPINE MUSLIM INSURGENCY, AKRAM SAID, BUT THE GOP DOES ASSUME THAT THE SUBJECT IS LIKELY TO COME UP IN THE CAIRO MEETING AS IT DID EARLIER IN THE LAST ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING IN KUALA LUMPUR. AKRAM KNEW OF THE RECENT DISCUSSIONS IN JIDDA BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF PHILIPPINES AND THE MUSLIM INSURGENTS AND
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PAGE 02 ISLAMA 01813 010933Z

REFERRED TO THEM AS INCONCLUSIVE.

3. PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO'S CONCERNS WITH DISSIDENT FORCES IN HIS TWO WESTERNMOST PROVINCES MIGHT TEND TO MAKE HIM SOMEWHAT SYMPATHETIC WITH PROBLEM MARCOS GOVERNMENT FACING IN SOUTH, AS EMBASSY MANILA SUGGESTS (REFTEL). HOWEVER, PRIME MINISTER MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE MANNER IN WHICH THE PHILIPPINE INSURGENCY IS INTERPRETED LOCALLY. MOST PAKISTANIS, AS STAUNCH MUSLIMS, THINK IN HIGHLY EMOTIONAL TERMS OF THIS ISSUE AS A CONFLICT BETWEEN AGGRESSIVE CHRISTIANS AND THEIR BROTHER MUSLIMS (WHO ARE OFTEN DESCRIBED IN PRESS AS "MUSLIM FREEDOM FIGHTERS"). BHUTTO MAY WELL CONCLUDE THAT IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES IT IS POLITICALLY PRUDENT FOR HIM TO AVOID INVOLVEMENT IN THE MATTER.

4. EMBOFFS HAVE HAD EXTENSIVE DEALINGS WITH NEW PAK AMBASSADOR IN MANILA, M.A. BHATTI, AND STRONGLY SECOND MANILA'S VIEW THAT HE COMPETENT. WE REGARD HIM AS PARTICULARLY KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT MULTI-LATERAL DIPLOMACY FOR WHICH HIS LAST JOB (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR UN) PREPARED HIM WELL.
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